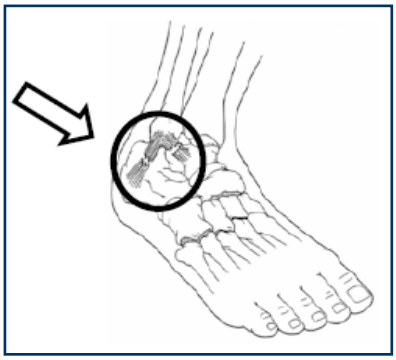
ANKLE SPRAIN
RECOVERY & PREVENTING RISK OF FUTURE INJURY

A sprain to the ankle is a twisting injury that stretches of tears the ligaments that hold the ankle and foot bones together. Generally approximately 80% of sprains are caused by rolling the foot inward. Unfortunately this can lead to instability and re-injury by 40-70%. However with proper post-injury care, rehabilitation exercises and bracing can decrease this risk significantly.



Speeding Up Recovery by Using PRICE (During the first 72-hours after injury)

P=Protection. Your ankle may be splinted, taped or braced to prevent further injury.

R=Rest. You should rest from all activities that cause pain or limping. Use properly fitted crutches, until you can walk without pain or any limping.

I=Ice. Please a plastic bas with ice on the ankle for 15-20 minutes, 3-5 times per day for the first 24-72 hours. Leave the ice off at least 1 ½ hours between applications.

C=Compression. Unless your doctor provided a brace, wrap with an elastic bandage form the toes to mid calf, using even pressure. Wear this until swelling decreases. Loosen the wrap if your toes start to turn blue or feel cold.

E=Elevate. Keep your ankle elevated above your heart at all times, except for hygiene and bathroom use.

Continued other side…

Restoring Ankle to Normal Function (After 72-hours/3-10 days)

After your first 72-hours or on the third day after your injury, it is necessary to begin therapeutic exercises to return your ankle to normal function. Again remember, that once your ankle has been injured your risk of future injury is between 40-70%. By following these recommendations will help to reduce this risk significantly and strengthen your ankle.

- **If your doctor put your ankle in a boot, brace, or wrap, remove it now do to these exercises. You may also remove this while you sleep or bathe.**
- **You may put your body weight on your ankle as you are able, so long as there is no pain.**
- **As your ankle gets stronger, start to walk around your immobilizer device (boot, brace or wrap) while in your home. Wear this only when you feel you need the added support to make walking comfortable for you. Eventually you will wear your immobilizer less and less when walking in your home. However you may need the immobilizer for some extra support when walking long distances or on uneven or rocky ground during this time.**

1. Range of Motion Exercises: Help to regain your normal ankle motion.

- Technique:
  - Sit down with your knee straight.
  - Flex your foot back towards your body, then back down like pressing the gas pedal of a car.
- Frequency: Repeat 10-times, three times per day.

(DeCarli, 2012)

Flexibility (Stretching) Exercises

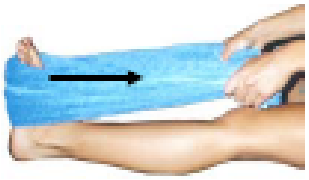
Loosen tight leg muscles. Tightness makes it hard to use stairs, walk, run, and jump.

Technique:	Hold each exercise 20-30 seconds at a gentle stretch. Do not bounce!
Frequency:	6-10 repetitions/exercise, 5-7 days per week

Calf Stretch

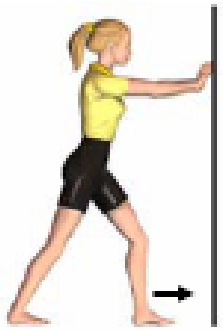
Basic: Sit with your knee straight and towel looped around the ball of your foot.

- Slowly pull back until you feel your upper calf stretch.



Advanced: Once you can stand, try stretching with your hands on a wall.

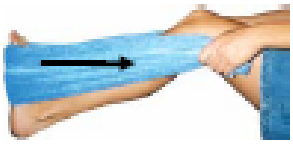
- Place the injured foot behind the other with your toes pointing forward.
- Keep your heels down and back leg straight.
- Slowly bend your front knee until you feel the calf stretch in the back leg.



Heel Stretch

Basic: Sit with your knee slightly bent.
Loop a towel around the ball of your foot.

- Slowly pull back until you feel a stretch in the lower calf and heel.



Advanced: Once you can stand, try placing your injured foot behind the other with your toes pointing forward.

- Keeping your heels down, slowly bend your back knee until you feel a heel stretch in the back leg.

Strengthening Exercises

Strong leg muscles help the ligaments hold the ankle together.

Frequency:	3 sets of 20 repetitions, 5-7 days per week

Front of Shin

Basic - Push Out

- With your foot flat on the floor, push it outward against a wall, file cabinet or bookcase. Hold for three seconds.

Advanced - Band

- Tie the band to a desk or dresser.
- Sit with your foot and knee in line and loop the band over the outside of your foot.
- Push your foot out against the band.

Inner Shin

Basic - Push In

- With your foot flat on the floor, push it inward against your other foot. Hold for three seconds.

Advanced - Band

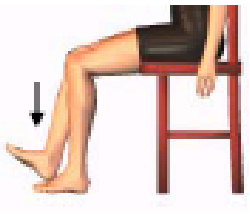
- Tie the band to a desk or dresser.
- Sit with your foot and knee in line, and loop the band over the inside of your foot.
- Push your foot in against the band.

(DeCarli, 2012)

Front of Shin

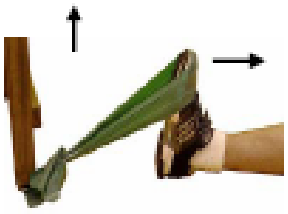
Basic - Push Up

- Place the heel of your other foot on top of the injured one.
- Push down with the top heel while trying to push up with the injured foot. Hold for three seconds.



Advanced - Band

- Tie the band to a desk or dresser.
- Sit with your leg straight and loop the band over the top of your foot.
- Slowly pull your foot back against the band.



To Prevent Re-injury

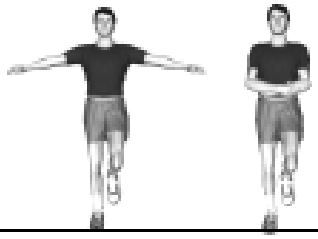
- Continue daily calf and heel stretching, especially after activity (indefinitely)
- Continue ankle strengthening 3-4 days per week (indefinitely)
- Complete the balance tests and exercises (if needed)
- Wear an ankle brace during strenuous activity (indefinitely)

Balance

An ankle sprain can decrease your ability to balance on that foot and makes it easier to roll the ankle again. As soon as you can stand without pain, try the balance tests below. If you can't balance for ten seconds without wobbling, practice that level every day until you can. You can stop when you pass the Level 4 test.

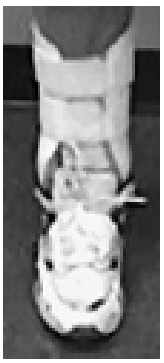
Technique:	Balance on your injured foot for 10-30 seconds, do a least 6 repetitions per day.
Goal:	Stand 60 seconds without losing your balance, then move to the next level.

Level 1 - Arms out to your side, eyes open
Level 2 - Arms across your chest, eyes open
Level 3 - Arms out to your side, eyes closed
Level 4 - Arms across your chest, eyes closed



Bracing

Injured ligaments can take many weeks to heal. An ankle brace helps protect the ligaments not only during recovery but also when returning to sport or exercise activities.



Common beliefs

- Bracing can replace strengthening exercises - FALSE! Strong lower leg muscles help provide support to injured ligaments.
- Wearing a brace makes an ankle weaker - FALSE, if you continue your strengthening exercises. Plus, a brace can help improve your balance and thus prevent injury.
- Braces won't fit in shoes - FALSE! Professional and college athletes wear them all the time.

This is not a comprehensive reconditioning program, but will get you on your way to recovery. If your ankle isn't fully functional after one month, contact your health care provider.

(DeCarli, 2012)

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